
L I C E N S E D,

March 16. 1686.

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SOME
DIALOGUES

between Mr. G. and others

WITH



REFLECTIONS,

Upon a Book called

PAX VOBIS.

By M^r Linford.



4.

L O N D O N;

Printed for Randall Taylor, near
Stationers-Hall, 1687.

20 M E

DIALOGUES

Between Mr. D. and others

W. L. H.

REFLECTIONS

Upon a Book called

PAX NOBIS.



W. D. O. N.

Printed for Randall Taylor, Stationers-Hall, 108.

THE PREFACE.

I N these following Dialogues, I have not pretended to inquire whether the Author of Pax Vobis, has in his Dialogues fairly represented those of the Reformation; being resolved to see where the mighty strength of that piece of Reasoning lay, upon supposition that all the Sayings and Matters of Fact, which he charges upon Protestants, were just as he has reported them. I fancy it will come into some bodies head or other, to take a little pains about that. But be it so or not, I

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an apt to think it will be allowed by every unprejudiced Person, That a sufficient Reply is here given to the great design and business of that Book; and that for the future, it is not likely to impose upon any, who are not very weak in their Understandings, or something that is much worse.

As to the different Opinions amongst those of the Reformation, it cannot be more objected against us by our Adversaries, than it is lamented amongst our selves: but we cannot but wonder to hear them make that an Objection against us, of which it is so manifest, themselves have been so great a Cause.

We are much obliged to them, for their being so sollicitous to render us less

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liable to Mistakes, than according to our own Principles it seems we are, and are very ready to embrace any Directions which may be helpful to us in our Inquiries after Truth; but we think they take a most preposterous way to bring us to the knowledge thereof, who, because we and others may be deceived, go about to persuade us, that we shall always necessarily be so, unless we submit to the Direction of such Guides, which without giving us any assurance of what they pretend, that they neither will nor can deceive us, they are pleased to recommend unto us.

As if because among those who walk through London-Streets in the day-time, some happen to stumble, others to fall into the dirt, others to

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lose their way, that therefore it is the most prudent course which any Man can take, to come out in the Night, and according to the Direction of those who confidently assure him, that they will bring him safe to his Journeys end, having put his Neck into an Halter, to suffer himself to be drag'd through thick and thin, until he is almost choaked, and instead of being brought to the place whither he designed to go, finds himself at last thrown into a Ditch with his Pockets pick'd.

None can be more ready than we should be to submit to the Guidance of an infallible Director did we know where to find him; but of this we despair, especially since one of the best Arguments to persuade us to inquire

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quire after him, is nothing else but an Objection against Human Nature, and a Reflection upon God Almighty for having made us such Creatures as we find our selves to be.

Because some in the use of their Reason are, and may be deceived, that therefore all must, is a Consequence which any one might be apt to think would seem ridiculous to all Mankind.

And therefore it is easie to guess of what Spirit and Temper they are, who, by such weak Motives, are tempted to leave our Communion.

Especially since we cannot but take notice, that even amongst those whose Conversations, to our great grief, have not discovered that prevailing

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vailing Sense of Religion, which might be expected from Men professing the pure and sincere Doctrine of Christianity, there are but very few, who by much more powerful Arguments have been prevailed with to forsake it.

Who the Author of Pax Vobis is, we are not inquisitive to know, but some are inclinable to believe him a Convert, both from his being so well acquainted with the Scripture, and from the profane use which he now thinks fit to make of it.

To apply these [Stand fast in the Liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, Gal. 5. 1. --- Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is Liberty, 2 Cor. 3. 17. In my Father's House are many Man-

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Mansions; Job. 14. 2.] and such like places after such a manner, as to make them import a Liberty given by Christ, to believe and act as we please, is an excellent way to ridicule the Bible. And the Church of R. does very well to forbid the free use thereof, if they of her Communion are so apt to abuse it as this Author has done.

The Controversie between us and our Adversaries, has been hitherto managed with as little Reflection as the Cause would bear; but if in these Dialogues we do not behave ourselves so very gravely towards them as we have done formerly, they who gave the occasion are to be blamed for it.

For

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For they have no just Reason to be angry with us if (as long as we keep within the bounds of Decency, Truth, and Loyalty) we are by them provoked to express our selves after a different manner than we had otherwise intended.

The

**The First Dialogue between
Mr. G. and his Clerk.**

The Second
and
The Third

} Dialogues be-
tween Mr. G.
and Esq; T.

The First Dialogue between
Mr. G. and his Clerk.

The Second
and
The Third
Dialogues be-
tween Mr. G.
and His Clerk.

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REFLECTIONS

Upon a Book called

PAX VOBIS.

First Dialogue

Between Mr. G. and his Clerk.

Cl. **G**OD save you Ma-
ster; You are wel-
come home.

Mr. G. I thank you *John*. How
do all my Neighbours?

Cl. Very well, Sir, God be prai-
sed.

Mr. G. I am glad to hear it: But
what makes you stare more at me
now,

now, than you were wont to do formerly? You wonder, I warrant, to see me wear a Sword and Crevat.

Cl. Indeed, Master, so I do: I never saw you in this Garb before.

Mr. G. There are great Alterations in the World, and it ought to seem no strange thing if I am somewhat alter'd from what I was.

Cl. There are great Alterations indeed Master, but I cannot understand why they should make you leave off your Gown and Cassock. I hope you do not intend, Sir, to preach in your Sword and Crevat.

Mr. G. You need not fear it, Man; for I do not intend to preach at all: I must leave that to others who have better Authority to do it than I have.

Cl. Better Authority? I am sure you are a Minister, Sir, and I have heard my Father, who was a Clergy-man, and died in the beginning of

of the great Rebellion, often say, That once a Minister, and always a Minister; and that a Man's Orders could never be taken from him.

Mr. G. That is true, if a Man has such Orders as he ought to have; but I never was so happy as to have any such.

Cl. I beg your Pardon, Sir, I now guess what you mean, and truly, Sir, it has been a great trouble to the whole Parish to hear that you was turn'd. But pray, Master (if I may be so bold) how could you officiate as a Minister, if you had no Orders? Or have you only since his present Majesty came to the Crown, discovered that you have none?

Mr. G. I knew it a long time before that happened.

Cl. I am sorry to hear you say so, Master; because there are some ill Men in the Parish, who, if this be once known, will clamour against

gainst you, as if you were a Man of no Conscience, in that altho you knew your self to be no Minister, You have officiated as one, and altho you knew the Church of *England* to be in the wrong, yet you instructed all your People to live and die in the Communion of it.

Mr. G. Whatever I may have done heretofore, I intend to do so no longer.

Cl. Shall we then lose you, Sir, presently?

Mr. G. I do not intend to officiate any longer amongst you, but I will send you a very good Curate.

Cl. And take the Profits your self, as you did formerly?

Mr. G. Ay *John*, Why should I not?

Cl. O, Master, it would be better to resign your Living: for, if he be satisfied in his Mind (will those ill Men say) that he is no Minister, why does he pretend to take care of
our

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our Souls? Nay, if he thinks no Man can be saved in the Communion of the Church of *England*, and therefore has himself left it, what a wicked thing is it for him to contribute still to our being educated in the same Errors, and to take Mony for deceiving us by his Curat after the same manner, as he for several Years has deceived us himself. Excuse my Boldness, Master, I only tell you what Mr. G. and Mr. H. who never loved you heartily, will say of you.

Mr. G. You know *John*, I al-
ways liked your freedom. Mr. G.
and Mr. H. may say what they
please, but perhaps it will not be
long before I return to my Cure my
self.

Cl. To tell you the Truth, Ma-
ster, the whole Parish is very much
against Popery; but if they must
have a Popish Minister, I am very
confident, that the generality of
B 2 them,

them would rather have you, with whom they are acquainted, than any Stranger whatsoever.

Mr. G. I am much beholden to them: Pray remember me to Esq; F. and to every body else. Farewell *John*.

Cl. Farewell Master.

Second Dialogue

Betwixt Esq; F. and Mr. G.

Esq; F. **P** Arson, Father, Lay-Brother, What shall I call you? You are welcome home. Indeed you have served us a fine trick, to desert us when we stand in most need of you.

Mr. G. Sir, I am your most humble Servant: Pray, how does your Lady, and the rest of your good Family?

Esq; F. We are all, God bethanked,

ed, in good Health, but not a little concerned to hear that our Spiritual Pastor is become a *Wandener*.

Mr. G. That Name rather belonged to me before my return to my true Mother, who, with open Arms, has been pleased to receive her truly penitent Prodigal Son.

Esq; F. She is very kind to Prodigals, for to my knowledg, she has received, with open Arms, many of that Character; but I do not think that Name to belong to thee, unless upon the account of Conscience, and of that, I fear, thou hast been as Prodigal as the best of them all.

Mr. G. However prodigal I may seem to be of it, nothing but Conscience could have caused this Change in me. I should never have forsaken the Communion of the Church of England, if I could with a safe Conscience have lived in it.

Esq; F. I am asham'd to hear thee talk of Conscience. Was it Conscience for thee to educate us and our Children for several Years, according to the Rules of that Church, in whose Communion thou didst not believe either us or thy self to be safe? Or, is it now Conscience in Thee to receive 120 *l.* *per Annum*, and to barter with some young Fellow for 30 *l.* to do that among us, which thou believest to be a Sin in him, and what will help to keep us still in a state of Damnation?

Mr. G. My Clerk told me indeed, that I must expect to be severely censured by some of the Parish; but I did hope to have met with better Usage from Esq; F.

Esq; F. What honest Man can forbear to be a little concerned, when he sees such doings amongst those who pretend to teach others their Duty.

Mr.

Mr. G. The Apostles themselves were reviled, and a many ill things were reported of them, and I ought not to expect to fare otherwise, who am gone over to a persecuted Church.

Esq; F. This is meer Cant, as thou very well knowst: But I would have Thee take care, lest thy Conversion prove not the occasion of a sort of lesser Persecution, even from those of thy own Religion. For to live in the Communion of one Church, and to be all the while of another, is so scandalous a Practice, that it deserves a seven Year's Mortification; and were I to be thy Confessor, I would swinge you with a vengeance, before I gave you Absolution. Pray tell me one thing, Have you received Orders from the Church of Rome, or not?

Mr. G. I have not.

Esq; F. Nor will be permitted

I suppose, in haste, before you have made some better Satisfaction to the Church for the Scandal you have given it by your double-dealing. Let us see you set out a Narrative of your Conversion, with a cloud of Witnesses to justify it. Let us see you answer some of those troublesome Papers which the Hereticks at *London* daily set forth, and then perhaps you shall be put into a Capacity of injoying a Living, not your own, for that is *Meat*, for your Masters, but some smaller one of 30 or 40 *l. per An.* which is a good Competency for one that durst not declare till t'other day, who must not expect to feed upon such Delicacies, as belong only to those who have deserved well all their Life-time in the Service of the Catholick Cause.

Mr. G. What I have done has not been with a prospect of any present Advantage. It is my greatest

est Reward and Comfort, that I am in the right way to Heaven; and I hope that it will not be long before your self and others are perswaded to forsake their Errors, as I have done.

Esq; F. You must then produce better Arguments than the World has yet seen; for certainly no Cause was ever more baffled than yours of late has been.

Mr. G. I wonder why you should say so, since it is built upon an infallible Foundation: Whilst the Reformation relies wholly upon the uncertain Reasonings of every particular Person, and gives liberty to every one to believe what he pleases.

Esq; F. What you call an infallible Foundation, has been sufficiently shown to be but a sandy one. But what you mean by the uncertain Reasonings of every particular Person, and by giving leave to believe what

what a Man pleases, I do not well understand.

Mr. G. My meaning in short is this. That the Rule of Faith of the Reformation being Scripture, as each Person of sound Judgment in the Church understands it, whatever any particular Person judgeth to be the meaning of Scripture, will be to him his Rule of Faith; and therefore since different Persons do put different Interpretations upon the Scripture; nay, since the same Persons do interpret it at one time one way, and at another time another, it must necessarily follow, that the Principle, upon which the Reformation is built, is very uncertain. For one Man may be of one Perswasion, another of another, a third of one different from both. Nay, the same Person may change his Perswasion twice or thrice in a day, and yet continue still a true Son of the Reformation.

Esq;

Esq; F. I do now guess what you would be at, and perceive that you are well acquainted with a Book called *Pax Vobis*.

Mr. G. That is a notable Book.

Esq; F. I allow it to have a great deal of Wit, more of Malice, but nothing of Argument.

Mr. G. The Book has sold wonderfully, which is a sign that it has Argument in it.

Esq; F. It is no sign amongst us of the Reformation, for we read Books of all sorts, and are pleased with every thing that is well done in its kind, whether with Argument or without it, whether written by an Enemy or a Friend. And this is such a freedom, that I would not part with it for all the World. So that if I had no other Argument against your Religion, this to me would seem sufficient, that, if I had once embraced it, and such a sort of Book as *Pax Vobis* should
come

come out against it, I should not dare, without a License, to peep into it, but should think it a Book as much to be avoided as *Chillingworth*, Dr. *Stillingfleet*'s Rational Grounds of the Protestant Religion, or the Bible it self.

Mr. G. Nay, the Reformation gives you freedom enough; for it allows you not only to read any Books, but to be of any Perswasion, if you judg it to be agreeable to Scripture.

Esq; F. You have expressed in short the whole design of that Book, in which, altho there are seven Dialogues, yet is there no more said in all of them to prove his Conclusion, than in any one of them.

Mr. G. May not a Man use different Arguments to prove the same thing?

Esq; F. Yes, he may: But this Author has not done it; for to prove his Conclusion, he makes use of the same Argument in every Dialogue, with

with variety of Reflections upon several Persons and Things.

Mr. G. Is he not to be commended for it?

Esq; F. He is to be commended for his variety of Reflections; for this makes his Book pleasant. But when he would pretend to make out so material an Objection against the Reformation, it cannot sure be so very commendable, to make use of the same Argument over and over again.

But this seems to be an allowed Practice amongst you: for altho all your most considerable Objections have been answer'd an hundred times; yet are we daily troubled with them, as if they had never been heard of before; and almost every Fortnight out comes that astonishing Question, Where was your Church before Luther?

Mr. G. If he makes use but of one Argument, it is however such an Argument

gument as ought to perswade every honest Man to forsake the Reformation, which is founded upon a Principle that gives a Man leave to be in *England* a Protestant, in *Germany* a Lutheran, in *Hungary* a Socinian; and to change his Religion as often as he pleases.

Esq; F. This is all out of *Pax Vobis*; But how does it appear that a Man may thus change his Religion from that Principle, That the Scriptures, as any Man of sound Judgment interprets them, are the Rule of Faith?

Mr. G. Because a Man may alter his Judgment, and interpret Scripture otherwise than he did; and since he may lawfully stick to that Interpretation which he himself puts upon it, he may change his Religion as often as he thinks fit to alter his Judgment.

Esq; F. That does not always follow: for a Man may perhaps think

think fit to profess an alteration of his Judgment without any just Reason, or without having made any inquiry, whether he may safely do it or no; and if he does so, the alteration of his Judgment is so far from being a Reason why he should change his Religion, that it is in it self a great fault.

Mr. G. But suppose he does find Reason to alter his Judgment, may he not then change his Religion?

Esq; F. Yes, he is bound to do it, altho he should change Truth for Error.

Mr. G. And so he may turn from one thing unto another, until he has turn'd as often as there are Points in the Compass, and be a true Child of the Reformation all the while.

Esq;

Esq; F. He is bound to alter his Perswasion, as oft as he meets with sufficient Arguments to convince him that he ought to do so. But there is a great deal of difference between what is Truth, and what a Man believes to be so. A Man is bound to act according to an erroneous Conscience, until he is better informed; but it does not therefore follow, that his Conscience is not erroneous; or that if he has had opportunities of undeceiving himself, he is not in a very dangerous Condition. Now the Author of *Pax Vobis* would insinuate that those of the Reformation do believe that to be true, which any Church, or particular Persons judg to be so, and that there is a Liberty allowed amongst them to profess, or deny any Tenets whatsoever.

Mr. G. How can it be otherwise, since there are such different Opinions amongst them, some of them have so often changed their minds, and yet have still continued true Members of the Reformation?

Esq; F. The Reformation is a word which denotes all those, whether Churches or Persons, which have left the Communion of the Church of *Rome*. Now it may happen that some of those which have left that Communion, may separate from it by degrees, others all at once; that some of them may maintain some of that Church's Errors, and others may maintain Errors as bad as any which she holds. But does it therefore follow, because all these are stiled Members of the Reformation upon the account of their not living in Communion with the Church of *Rome*, that they are all in the right, and that a man may lawfully hold whatever is maintained by any of them? C Mr

Mr. G. They all pretend to soundness of judgment ; and their common Rule of Faith is, Scripture as interpreted by men of sound judgment.

Esq; *F.* The Rule is good, but their pretences are not. For a man may think his judgment to be sound, when it really is not ; and although he is bound to adhere to that interpretation, which for want of soundness of judgment he puts upon Scripture, yet the interpretation is not therefore at all the truer, nor can it be an indifferent thing for me or any one else to approve or not to approve of it.

Mr. G. One would think that it were an indifferent thing, when there are and have been so many great men amongst you who maintain Opinions contrary the one to the other, and yet all pretend to truth, and to be true Members of the Reformation.

Esq; *F.*

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E. F. I tell thee once again, That a man is said to be a true Member of the Reformation by being supposed to have left the Communion of the Church of *Rome*; but yet that every one who has left that Communion, may not in all respects maintain what is Truth, although he may pretend to it. And therefore a man that has left that Communion, is still obliged to make a strict inquiry whether it be lawful for him to embrace the terms of that other Communion into which he has admitted himself; and after he has done so, not to desert it without good reason.

Mr. G. Does not every Member of the Reformation pretend to have reason on his side?

Esq; F. But the great question is, whether he has reason or no.

Sir, I cannot stay with you at present any longer; but before I go, I will leave with you one familiar

instance, which seems to me to be a sufficient confutation of that whole Book which we have discoursed of.

Mr. G. I long to hear it.

Esq; F. Suppose the Emperor of the *Turks* should turn Christian.

Mr. G. I wish he would.

Esq; F. You mean *Roman Catholick*.

Mr. G. Unless he turns *Roman Catholick*, he might as well never turn Christian.

Esq; F. We will let that alone at present. You may well think that after his conversion he will be very desirous to have his people turn, as well as himself; and you must needs allow it to be very reasonable for the whole Empire to do it.

Mr. G. Nothing can be more reasonable.

Esq; F. Now suppose one man turns, because thoroughly convinced of the Excellency of the Christian Religion;

Religion; Another retains his wonted kindness for his old *Mahumetan* way of Worship, but yet for fear of losing by it, turns too. A third, to gain somewhat by it, which he knows not otherwise how to get, turns Christian, although his sentiments are the same with those of the second. A fourth has some high flying hopes, and although he does not turn at present, yet he is ready to do it when ever it is required of him. It is therefore lawful to turn Christian, or to be ready to turn, to save by it, or to get by it, or in hopes of getting, for this reason, or for that reason, or for any other reason whatsoever.

Mr. G. You are pleasant, Sir; but I do not perceive the consequence of this Discourse.

Esq; F. Think on it, and you will find it to be as good a consequence, as that which your Author so much insists upon.

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no But I can stay no longer, Parson,
Farawell, I should be glad to see
you at my House.

Mr. G. I shall not forget to wait
upon you.

Esq; F. You must forgive me for
calling you Parson, still. I protest I
cannot forget my old Compellati-
on.

Mr. G. Sir, I am your Servant.

The

The Third Dialogue.

Esq; F. **S**IR, your humble Servant. This is kindly done. I find you Catholicks have more Charity than some would make you to have.

Mr. G. I am always true to my word, Sir.

Esq; F. In lesser matters you mean.

Mr. G. Nay in the greatest.

Esq; F. We will not dispute that Point. You are heartily welcome, although I must frankly tell you, Not so welcome as you were wont to be. Pray will you sit down.

Mr. G. I fear I shall disturb you, Sir.

Esq; F. Not in the least; I was diverting my self with the famous

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Pamphlet which we talked of when we were last together; and am glad you are come, that we may have a little more chat about it.

M. G. I do not doubt, but that you have read it over long before now; Pray Sir, what do you think of it?

Esq; F. I have read it over twice or thrice, and think of it, as I told you when I was with you; *viz.* That the Book is a pleasant Book, but that there is little of Argument in it; and that which it has, does not at all prove the Conclusion.

Mr. G. The men of the Reformation, I suppose, do not much like the Conclusion.

Esq; F. I know not what others like; I, for my part, like every thing that is well proved.

Let me intreat you to take the Book, and as you turn over the leaves to give me the Contents of every Dialogue, and let us consider together, with what strength he proves,
That,

That, according to the Principles of the Reformation, a man may change his Religion as oft as he pleases ; and that it is an indifferent thing, what opinions a man holds.

Mr. G. Does he not in his first Dialogue show you the facility of such a change, *p. 5.* ? And give you instances of those who have made it, *p. 7.* ?

Does he not tell you how readily they of different perswasions, join together in the same Worship, *p. 8.* ?

That the Synod of *Charenton* has allowed it, *p. 9.* ?

Does he not instance in the several Changes which have been made here in *England*, *p. 10.* ?

And in the Opinions of several Doctors who have allowed Hereticks to be members of the Church ?

In his second Dialogue he makes mention of great differences amongst those of the Reformation, concerning their Rule of Faith ; but
that

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that it is resolved at last into the judgment of every particular person.

He then quotes several gross opinions of *Calvin* and others, which he declares to be the Doctrine of the Reformation, and that they may be believed by any man whatsoever.

Esq; *F.* Pray go on, Sir.

Mr. G. In his Third he shows, That every Woman and Cobler, according to the Doctrine of the Reformation, may preach and instruct others, and hold several Blasphemous Tenets, which he there gives an account of.

In his Fourth he relates other wicked Tenets of the Reformation, especially such as encourage looseness of manners.

In his fifth, Such as have respect to Christs having establish'd a Church; to the truth of what he and the Apostles taught; to the disagreement about the Canon of Scrip-

Scripture ; to the changing of Scripture ; to the Doctrines of Justifying Faith, of Works, of Gods Grace, of the keeping his Commandments ; all which wicked Tenets he makes it appear, that several of the Reformers have held, and therefore that they are ^{to} the Doctrines of the Reformation, and may lawfully be held by any Member thereof, if he will adhere to his own Principles.

Esq; *F.* We shall see that by and by : Pray give me the sense of the two last Dialogues.

Mr. *G.* In the beginning of the sixth he inveighs against the Church of *England*, for pretending to impose upon her Members, her Interpretations of Scripture, which is no more than what is done by the Papists, and is directly contrary to the Doctrine of the Reformation. In the latter end thereof, and in the beginning of the seventh, he shews, that according to the Principles of
the

the Reformation, a man may believe all the Doctrines of the Popery; that several of the Reformers have believed several of them; and that the only difference betwixt the Papists and the Reformers in this case, is, That the former believe their Doctrines to be true, upon the Authority of the Church; the latter, because they judg them to be agreeable to Scriptures.

He avers in his Conclusion, That according to the Principles of the Reformation, no Doctrine or Tenet whatsoever can be wicked or blasphemous, but that all are sacred and solid Judgments; and reflects very sharply upon Dr. *Stil.* for making *Jupiter* to be the Supreme God.

Esq; *F.* He is very witty upon the Doctor, and would fain perswade him to turn Pagan; and I believe if the Doctor would be ruled by him, he could teach him how to do it, without ever turning from being a Christian. But

But since you have given a brief account of this Book, pray let us reckon what the whole thereof amounts to.

As far as I can perceive, the sum of all is no more than this, That several of the Reformers have changed from one thing to another, and that some of them have held most gross and scandalous Tenets; and therefore since every man is bound to follow his own Judgment, he may according to the Principles of the Reformation lawfully embrace any Opinion or Doctrine whatsoever.

Mr. G. That is indeed the Sum of what he has said, and to what the Reformation will never be able to give any satisfactory answer.

Esq; F. Be not too hasty, good Sir, in your Inferences. Because men are of different opinions, and will be so as long as the World endures, does it therefore follow that every one allows all opinions lawful, and that

that it is the same thing what opinion a man holds.

Mr. G. Any man would think so ; since they allow it to be lawful to change their opinions as oft as they in their own judgments shall think it reasonable so to do, and every man believes all the while his opinion to be true.

Esq; F. Does every one who believes his opinion to be true, believe the opinion of others, which is contrary thereunto, to be true also ?

Mr. G. By no means ; for as this Author tells you, p. 2. ' Each particular Congregation constrains as much as it can, all people to believe its own Tenets ; Protestancy would have us all be Protestants, and would root *Lutherans* out of the World, as well as Popery ; *Lutherans* would, if they could, draw all to their own net ; *Presbytery* esteems it self to be the best of all, and would crush Protestancy if it could ;

‘ could ; but that if we look upon
 ‘ the whole body of the Reforma-
 ‘ tion, as it includes all Reformed
 ‘ Congregations distinct from Po-
 ‘ pery, there is a holy extension of
 ‘ Spirit and Liberty for to be either
Lutherans, Presbyterians, Protestants,
 and any thing but Popery.

Esq; F. Those words, and what follows, make a certain sound in a mans ears, but I do not perceive any great matter to be in them. They rather imply a Contradiction, than any thing else.

For if the several parts of the Reformation believe their own opinions to be true, and would have all others to embrace them; how can the whole Body, which consists of the parts, be truly said to allow a liberty of believing what every man pleaseth ?

They may not only allow a liberty, but may assert it to be necessary that every one should follow

low his own judgment, although he be never so much mistaken. But where do they allow it to be an indifferent thing whether he be mistaken or no?

Mr. G. What think you of the Synod of *Charenton* in *France*, held about the year 1634, which expressly says, that for your Salvation, it is all alike whether you be a *Calvinist*, *Lutheran*, or of any other Congregation?

Esq; F. To cut you short in this matter; It is not to be supposed that I who am a Layman should understand what Synods have determin'd, or what are the Opinions of particular Learned men in these and such like cases, and therefore cannot tell whether this Author has rightly represented matters or no.

Mr. G. Why should you think otherwise?

Esq; F. Because there are some people in the World who give themselves

selves a great liberty of representing things either truly or falsely, as they judge it to be most expedient for their present purpose.

Mr. G. Why do you suppose this Author to have done so?

Esq. F. He may have done so for ought that I can tell; but I do not suppose that he has, but rather chuse to allow all his Representations to be true; and yet I cannot see what other effect his Book can have upon the mind of any judicious man, than the giving him some little sensual pleasure in the reading of it.

Mr. G. It has had good effect amongst some people; and a certain man of Authority in a certain University, publickly owns himself in all companies to have been converted by it.

Esq. F. Every man, in every place of Authority there, is not always the wisest or the honestest man in the University; but whatever your

certain man may say, I am of opinion, That if this Book makes no more Converts any where else, than 'tis likely to make in an *Univerſity*; there has been no ſmall pains taken to little purpoſe.

Mr. G. You will allow, I ſuppoſe, that this Author may have ſaid enough to convince any man in the *Univerſity*, or out of it, of the abſurd Opinions of ſeveral Reformers.

Eſq; F. He may do that indeed, if all the Stories which he tells, are true.

But how do theſe men's Errors concern me? or what will it avail to perſwade me to relinquish my Opinion, (which is the great deſign of this Book) that others are, or have been miſtaken?

My Buſineſs is to enquire, Whether the Terms of that Communion to which I belong, are juſt and equitable; and ſince, God be thanked, I find them to be ſo, I do
not

not intend to forsake that Communion, because others are not, or have not been, of my mind.

Mr. G. But the Synod of *Charenton* tells you, that you may, if you please.

Esq; F. I am not certain, whether the Synod of *Charenton* tells me so, or no; but if it does, it will not weigh at all with me, since the Church of *England* tells me no such thing; but having prescribed such terms of Communion, as are Just and Orthodox, declares those Members to be guilty of Schism, which depart from her.

Mr. G. She would, I know, arbitrarily impose her Rules and Interpretations of Scripture upon her Members; and what is this else, but a Spice of Popery, for which she nevertheless pretends to have so great an aversion?

Esq; F. This indeed your Author objects several times; and if it be a

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Spice of Popery, I heartily wish that Popery had nothing worse in it; but you are both under a great mistake, to fancy any agreement betwixt Popery and the Church of *England* in this matter; for Popery requires an intire Submission, without any previous Tryal or Examination; you must believe and practice what the Church prescribes, because she requires it. Whereas the Church of *England* gives you leave, nay desires you to examine the truth of her Doctrines, and the lawfulness of her prudential provisions and orders, and so depends not upon her own bare Authority, but is ready to justify to every one of her Members the reasonableness of her commands, which is plain and honest dealing, and ought to give great satisfaction to every wise and honest man.

Mr. G. I wonder why you should so magnifie the Church of *England*, which

which has as much establish'd this liberty of believing what we please, as any other part of the Reformation, having in a few years changed and establish'd different Religions by publick Acts of Parliament, as this Author has made out, p. 10.

E.F. It never troubles my head, what Changes and Alterations have been made, or how they have been made. That which I am concerned to know is, Whether the present settlement is contrived to promote Virtue and Goodness, as it ought to do, and whether it contains nothing contrary to the Word of God. .

Mr. G. Pray, Sir, is it lawful to settle one thing at one time, and the quite contrary at another ?

Esq; *F.* I do not say so : They who at any time settle what is destructive of good Manners, or contrary to the Word of God, do amiss. There is no such thing at present settled in the Church of *England*,

and therefore what care I how things were heretofore, or by what steps and degtees they came to be so well settled as they are.

Great alterations cannot be compleated in a moment ; and it required some time to bring men out of that darkness in which they had so long sat ; and if we were to be brought back again to that condition in which we then were, thirty or forty years might well be allowed to effect it in ; for how hasty soever some folk may be, it is not so easie a work to convert millions on the sudden. And besides, when men are blind, they are much more willing to have their sight restored, than when they see very well, to suffer their eyes to be put out.

Mr. G. I had thought that all Religious Congregations, and Pretenders to Piety, had at their first beginning been in the height of their perfection.

Esq; F.

Esq; F. That is one of the most silly things which your Author insists upon, p. 39. for Truth, after it has been obscured for a great while in any Nation, cannot be made immediately to recover its wonted brightness; and when great opposition is made against it, it is very well, if at first it gets any ground at all.

And therefore although a certain Gentleman has taken a great deal of pains to show how indecent and improper it is to call King *Hen. VIII.* the Postilion of the Reformation; yet does that expression very well declare his Courage and Resolution in first undertaking so hazardous an Enterprize, as well as the Effects thereof; his dashing all that were near and about him, as well as his receiving some dirt himself.

And although but little then was done in comparison of what was done afterward, yet was it well for

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us that so much was done; and I had much rather have lived in the latter end of his Reign, than in the days of our King *John*, when his Holiness was pleased to shut up our Church-doors, and would not be prevailed with to open them until the King upon his knees had resigned his Crown unto his Legat *Pandolphus*.

After the Reign of King *Edw. 6.* the Reformation came to no true Settlement until the days of Queen *Elizabeth*, since which time the alterations have been very inconsiderable; neither do I see what occasion we have for any more. But if any should happen, as long as nothing were established contrary to the Word of God, I could freely comply with them.

Mr. G. That is according to the Principles of several Reformers, who complied with the several Changes as fast as they were made.

Esq;

Esq; *F.* If their compliance was after the manner of honest *Mr. Chillingworth*, who when he was in the right way suspected he was in the wrong, and thereupon went out of it; but upon the discovery of his mistake, returned immediately into it again, they were to be commended for it. But if they turned out of interest, what do you tell me of them? If they were *Knaves* and *Hypocrites*, I do not intend to increase their number.

Mr. *G.* Is it not a scandal upon the Reformation, that such men should be of it, who give themselves the liberty of doing whatever seemeth best in their own eyes?

Esq; *F.* The Reformation, as I once before told you, is a word, and signifies no more than the forsaking the Church of *Rome*; and what objection is it against any mans leaving the Communion of that Church, That amongst those who have left it, there

there are as bad, if not worse, than those who continue in it.

What if amongst the Reformers, there be found a Vicar, of Bray, or an A. P. in an University, must it needs follow that you and some others will do as they did, if there were occasion? Think of that a little, because some men are always turning when 'tis convenient so to do, will you allow their Carriage to be an objection against all Converts?

Mr. G. Well Sir, it is a very wicked thing, that they who stile themselves Reformers, should be guilty of such practises, and hold such Blaspheinous Tenets as this Book assures you they have done.

Esq; F. Dost thou think that I value any man barely because he is a Reformer, if his Faith be Erroneous, or his Life scandalous? For instance, if you could make me believe that one of the Reformation drinks, till
be

he drinks Healths to the P— though perhaps when time was he would have drunk it t'other way; that a second Reformer is so indifferent in his Religion, that he cares not to defend his own Church to be a true Church. And that a third out-swears the boldest Collonel in the King of *Polands* Army, and drinks confusion to all Religions, till at last he drinks an Health to the D———
I think you cannot desire more liberal Suppositions against our selves, than these are. Nay, I make no question but you may find some mere Time-servers, some Drunkards, and common Swearers, and very scandalous debauched persons, not only in the Reformation at large, but even in the Communion of the Church of *England*. Pray Sir, mark what I say, and make your best on't; our Doctrine is pure, and so is our Form of Worship; but alas! the actions and lives of many of us are not so. But
must

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must not I therefore respect those worthy Gentlemen whose lives are unblamable, and who by their Writings and prudent demeanor have given such reputation to the Christian Profession, and to that Excellent Church of which they are Members?

Mr. G. Why, Sir, you are very free indeed with your own Communion, some of which you care not, if they be thought as bad as any of those Doctors which the Author of *Pax Vobis* makes mention of.

Esq; F. What if they be? Is it a sin to leave the Communion of the Church of *Rome*, because there are such as these out of it?

As there are a great many bad men amongst those of the Reformation (and if there be any who hold it lawful for every man to believe and practise what he pleases, I reckon those to be the worst of all) so there

there are a great many good men too. As there is error amongst some of them, so is there truth amongst others; and if any part of the Reformation ever had the latter, I am sure the present Church of *England* has. And therefore although I do very much suspect that the Author of *Pax Vobis* has not done fairly by the Reformers, yet granting all that he has said to be true, I am firmly resolved (and I have great reason to be so) notwithstanding all the different and perhaps Blasphemous Opinions of others; Notwithstanding the various changes and alterations which have been made by our forefathers, To continue firm to the present establishment, and so I believe will all the considering people that are in the whole Nation.

Come, Sir, we will talk no more about these matters.

Only let me add one thing before we go: That you of the Church of
Rome

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Some have at this time the least reason to find fault with the Heresies, Schisms, and extravagant Tenets of some of the Reformation, since it is so visible that they are like to do you better service than your best Arguments.

And therefore I should have thought that you would have been very much surpris'd that the Author of this Book has not only fairly by the Reformation, yet granting all that he has said to be true, I am fully resolv'd (and I have great reason to be so) notwithstanding all the different and perhaps illiberal Opinions of others; Notwithstanding the various charges and allegations which have been made by our forefathers, To continue firm to the protest establishment, and so I believe will all the considering people that are in the Christian Nation.

FINIS.

Come, Sir, we will talk no more about these matters.

Only let me add one thing before we go: That you or the Church of Rome

